

# MSBO Position and Positioning on Consolidation of School District Services

## MSBO believes...

- Schools should actively evaluate and, if appropriate pursue, the consolidation of services as one of the cost savings efforts they consider in these difficult times. Consolidation of services should be considered broadly, including between school districts, on a county-wide/ISD basis, and between school districts and other government entities. (e.g. cities, counties, etc.)
  - Caveats/conditions/considerations
    - While pursuing consolidation of services is worthwhile, is not a “silver bullet” solution to the problems of school funding.
    - Each set of districts within an ISD should create and enact their own plan rather than a single approach prescribed by the state.
    - MSBO needs to give guidance and assistance to schools and our members in this process.
    - MSBO needs to work with MAISA, MASA, MASB and others to accomplish these goals.
- Our general goal is to “Do the Right Thing” not focus on maintaining or changing the status quo, except where it makes sense.
- If this is worth doing, it is worth doing right. It will take time to determine what to do, then some time to implement. Probably a two year process to plan and begin implementation.

## MSBO's General Role

- Take a public stance on the issue
- Support and assist MASA, MAISA and MASB – they should set the policy course, MSBO may contribute to the policy discussion but our general role is to support the policy-setting organizations
- Work with the media to help give a full understanding of what this does and doesn't mean.
- Work with others in educational community – represent our members and our viewpoint as determined by the Board.
- Be an honest broker of accurate information.
- Create tools and services and information to help our members.

## Thinking It Through

- Value of consolidating services – the Pluses
  - Cost savings (Probably not as much as most seem to think.) Should MSBO conduct or commission an economic analysis of a range of potential savings?
  - Improved Quality a higher level of expertise may occur via consolidation following the Char-Em experience.
  - Allows local districts to better focus on educational services.
  - Good if it pushes more resources toward student learning
- Risks – the Minuses and/or fallacies
  - Lots of work but doesn't save as much \$s as people think
  - Doesn't always make sense to do – loss of local variability and control
  - Loss of local service/flavor
  - Politically and practically complex
  - It can detract from the more core issues of fixing the budget problem and/or improving teaching and learning
- Need for Flexibility – One size does not fit all, allow for varied approaches
  - NOT ISD only
  - What about larger intergovernmental cooperatives/
  - What about cooperatives through associations or other organizations?
  - Decision principles/rules
    - Can/should MSBO suggest decision rules for the local discussion?
    - How should we determine them?
    - Any thoughts on what they might be?
      - More \$ to classroom
      - Lower costs
      - Improve services
      - Retain local flexibility within reason

### State's role

- What should the state “promote”?
- Require all districts to consider a particular approach?
- Require all districts to create a plan around their ISD or a group of ISDs in collaboration?
- Incentives
- Penalties
- Other thoughts?

## Local Role

- Gather on ISD-wide or multiple ISD groups?
- Pursue a process for considering consolidation?
- What is the process? Should MSBO develop a recommended process with MAISA and others?

## A General Process

- Evaluate and list current collaborations
- Brainstorm new collaborations (curriculum, teaching, business and non-instructional, all administration, sports, everything!)
- Determine Cost/Benefit of new collaborations
- Develop implementation plan and calendar

## General Objectives of Consolidation?

- To reduce costs while maintaining or improving the quality of services
- To increase time local schools have to focus on education rather than support activities
- To maintain local flexibility where needed to allow for variation based on local circumstances
- To increase teaching learning opportunities for students and staff

## What Do Our Members Need to Help With This Discussion?

- Benchmarking information?
- Communication training?
- Experience of others?
- Background?

## Other Thoughts

- Should MSBO consider other services we can provide?
  - Facilitation of meetings
  - Analysis
  - Workshops
  - Tools and Information?

